

The Role of Social Media in The Formation of National Identity in The Post Truth era

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Abstract: *As time goes by, the use of digitalization is growing rapidly, especially in the use of social media used by both parents, adults, teenagers, and even children, because social media is a reference for everyone in everything. One of them is social media as a source of information or news from abroad and within the country, the majority of people who hear all the news circulating on social media are very easy to believe in it, even though the news is not yet known to be true or commonly referred to as post truth, resulting in a national identity crisis. The purpose of this research is to find out how people respond to the use of social media on national identity in this post truth era. The method used in this research is the literature method. This method is used to collect data from several accurate sources such as books, journals, articles, theses, and so on. This journal discusses the role of social media in post truth in shaping national identity, because basically a strong and united nation is able to create a sense of shared identity and togetherness in facing various challenges faced.*

Keyword: *social media, post truth era, national identity*

Abstrak: Seiring berjalannya waktu, pemanfaatan digitalisasi semakin berkembang pesat terutama pada penggunaan media sosial yang digunakan baik oleh orang tua, dewasa, remaja, bahkan anak-anak, karena media sosial menjadi rujukan setiap orang dalam segala hal. Salah satunya media sosial sebagai sumber informasi atau berita dari luar negeri maupun dalam negeri, mayoritas masyarakat yang mendengar segala berita yang beredar di media sosial setiap saat mudah mempercayainya, padahal berita tersebut belum diketahui kebenarannya atau biasa disebut dengan post truth sehingga mengakibatkan terjadinya krisis identitas bangsa. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana respon masyarakat terhadap pemanfaatan media sosial terhadap identitas bangsa di era post truth ini. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kepustakaan. Metode ini digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data dari beberapa sumber yang akurat seperti buku, jurnal, artikel, skripsi, dan lain sebagainya. Jurnal ini membahas tentang peran media sosial dalam post truth dalam membentuk identitas bangsa, karena pada dasarnya bangsa yang kuat dan bersatu mampu menciptakan rasa identitas bersama dan kebersamaan dalam menghadapi berbagai tantangan yang dihadapi.

Kata kunci: media sosial, era post truth, identitas bangsa

INTRODUCTION

Social media is an online platform that allows users to easily participate, share, and create content such as blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Blogs, social networks, and wikis are the most widely used forms of social media by people in various countries. Some other opinions state that social media is an online platform that supports social interaction, where web-based technology turns communication into an interactive dialog. (Liedfray T, dkk : 2022 : 2). In addition, another view also shows that social media is an online media that makes it easy for users to participate, share and build social networks, which is the most common form of social media used by people around the world. With the advancement of internet and mobile phone technology, social media is growing rapidly. (Mulyono F: 2021 : 57)

From these two statements, it can be concluded that social media is an online platform that is easily accessible for communicating, sharing information, and various other purposes. Social media is a form of technology that marks an important change in the way people exchange messages, both between individuals and groups. With the digital space, humans can now act as citizens of an interconnected world. Thus, people today can get information quickly from various sources, anytime and anywhere. However, the advancement of digital technology that brings together humans and machines has also led to a new phenomenon known as post truth. (Purba H, et al , 2023:4)

Today's society is faced with the post-truth phenomenon, a situation where people tend to ignore facts and ethics in giving opinions, preferring to support views that are in line with their personal beliefs. Gobber explains that post-truth is a situation where objective facts do not have a significant impact in shaping political discussions or public opinion, compared to the ability to move individual emotions and beliefs. Post-truth is a condition or era where “alternative facts” appear in place of actual facts, and feelings are considered more important than evidence. In a post-truth society, people tend not to pay attention to dialectical, dialogical, or systematic-philosophical methods of thinking; they prefer news or information that can upload their feelings or have personal affinity, regardless of whether the information is a hoax or slander. (Munir Chair and Zainul A, 2021:266)

On the one hand, the OED's definition of post-truth has indeed contributed greatly to reducing irresponsible claims that can undermine democratic processes and decision-making. However, on the other hand, the OED's understanding of post-truth also creates opportunities for discriminatory practices and makes people stop communicating with other groups. (zaiful haq: 2022: 100-101). From some of the statements above, it can be concluded that post-truth is a phenomenon in which many people ignore actual facts and tend to trust their personal beliefs more. Currently, the world is entering a new era known as post-truth, which is characterized by the greater influence of emotions compared to factual reality, according to Daryanto in (Lengga W, and Robertus W, 2023: 153). One example is

social media that can spread fake news or information that is not clear, so that it can affect the occurrence of a social identity crisis, political crisis, and crisis of public trust.

According to Faridah S, et al (2023: 2532) National Identity is a complex concept involving factors such as history, culture, values, and attitudes that bind citizens within a country. On the other hand, national identity is defined as a complex and multidimensional concept that includes various aspects such as culture, language, religion and history that make up a nation. According to Smith, national identity can be defined as a collective consciousness shared by a group of individuals who share common cultural elements and historical experiences.

In the context of Indonesia, national identity is very important given the diversity of ethnicities, religions and cultures that exist within it. This is in line with Anderson's opinion that national identity is a form of imagined community, where members do not know each other personally but feel a strong bond with each other (Dr. Akmal Haris, 2024: 14). In some of the above statements, national identity can be interpreted as a sense of togetherness and bond that people in a country feel because they have things in common such as history, culture, art, and so on. However, basically not all people know each other but are still one nation.

This research aims to understand the role of social media as a space for identity formation in the post truth era. This article does not take an approach that tends to look at national identity that is formed through official institutions such as education and the state, and reviews how social media becomes a field where national narratives are dynamically built and unfolded in the digital space. In a situation that is currently flooded with information circulating and not based on objective facts, national identity can actually form a narrative that is subjective, emotional, and easily popular (spread). In this case, people who act as new social agents not only consume, but also create and circulate national meanings through digital content or other things.

In addition, this research emphasizes the importance of understanding visual culture in the process of national identity formation on social media. It creatively emulates and disseminates things such as historical events, national symbols, or important figures in a visual format that is easily searched and consumed by the public. However, behind this prospect, this article reveals the problematic side of social media in the post truth era, namely the emergence of disinformation and narratives that have the risk of controversy that can lead to polarization. Therefore, this research provides a new contribution in explaining national identity by placing social media as a strategic platform that is full of truth and the complexity of national identity in the current post truth era.

RESEARCH METHODS

In the research arena, especially in scientific works, it cannot be separated from literature. Literature is often used as a reference or reference in the preparation

of scientific papers, so its existence is very important in the world of education. Therefore, this article is organized using a literature review approach. It can be said that a literature review is an activity that involves analysis, which can be in the form of criticism of research conducted on certain topics in the discipline, as well as collecting relevant sources such as scientific journals, articles, books, and others.

DISCUSSION

Social media as a medium for national expression

Today, technological advancements continue at a rapid pace. Everything has become easier and more practical, including accessing knowledge. One no longer needs to bother going to the library to read a book, or go to the market to shop; with an internet connection, everything can be obtained easily. This technological development clearly not only creates new media, but also new ways of communicating and interacting between people, as stated by Anggas (S, et al, 2023: 388) in (Nurrachmi F and Puspita T, 2018). Indonesia as a democratic country gives people the freedom to use social media, but with some restrictions that have been regulated in the 1945 Constitution article 28F. The source of this information comes from academic journals, articles, books, and others.

Social media has become a free place to express opinions, provide comments, and disseminate information, and has become a necessity that is part of everyday life. Various attractive social media platforms are provided very easily to the public, such as Whatsapp, Tiktok, Instagram, and others. People can freely communicate and spread news or find information on these platforms. There are opportunities to express ideas or thoughts that can be accessed by all groups. Netizens (individuals who are active in online activities) are given freedom without restrictions on place and time. There is freedom to express opinions, including commenting on other people's posts. (Angga S, et al, 2023: 385).

With the existence of social media as a manifestation of technological progress, it has a big impact on us while providing various benefits. With the ease with which we use social media, it is also easier for us to interact, find news and others easily, but because of the ease of access and the wide reach of social media, it makes it easier for people to trust something that has been spread on social media. social media can serve as a fairly efficient tool. Therefore, it is important to conduct research that analyzes the usefulness of social media in promoting and maintaining the sustainability of local culture in the archipelago. Culture is a national heritage that needs to be protected in order to continue to exist in the midst of globalization today. Culture itself is defined.

Culture itself is defined as all human activities that include knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, traditions, and various other aspects. This culture certainly requires preservation efforts from our country, given the importance of nationalism values in it. Preservation efforts mean actions to maintain the existence of local culture. These preservation measures are carried out by utilizing social media as a

promotional platform for local cultures in Indonesia. In addition to culture, education, tourism, art, and other fields can also be channels of national expression developed through social media.

In addition, serial media has a role in shaping digital nationalism such as strengthening national identity among today's young generation. National identity can be said to be a marker that is inherent in the nation and becomes a differentiator between one nation and another, as a young generation who will lead this future it is very important for all of us to maintain the national identity of the Indonesian nation, For this reason, it is necessary to make several efforts so that the national identity of our country is maintained.

In maintaining national identity for the younger generation, of course there are a number of factors that support it. Based on the results of interviews with PPKN teachers in Senior High Schools, there are several aspects that contribute to maintaining National Identity, one of which is instilling a sense of nationalism, preserving culture, and defending the country. A sense of nationalism should be instilled from a young age through various activities at school, such as singing national anthems, participating in ceremonies, and other activities. Preserving culture in Indonesia is the responsibility of the entire community, given that cultural values are an important element of the Indonesian national identity that is very valuable and we need to preserve it (Sak Diyah, et al, 2024: 282). Argues that correct information and builds a deep understanding of national issues. The younger generation has a strategic position as one that can utilize social media to support the strengthening of national identity. However, to maximize this potential, support is needed in the form of media literacy, increased access to quality content, and collaboration between the government, educational institutions and the community.

The challenge of post truth: Hoaxes, polarization, and identity manipulation

Facts and truths start to become unclear when in certain situations people are influenced by their emotions and judge 'what is' based on the same views among people. This has led to the emergence of the hoax phenomenon among the public. The hoax phenomenon, as expressed by Janner Simarmata et al (2019: 14), makes this period known as the post-truth era according to (Swarnawati A, and Robby M. 2022: 2).

The phrase post truth can be understood as a condition "after the truth". This term describes a state in which factual facts are hidden from society, or in other words, when the truth is distorted and false information is accepted as reality. In accordance with Sugiarto's opinion, the post-truth era can be considered a social change involving mainstream media and opinion influencers. Facts compete with fake news and lies for public trust. In simple terms, post-truth can be interpreted as a tendency for people to seek defense rather than truth (setkab. go. id). Block states that post-truth relates to conditions in which objective facts are less influential in

shaping public opinion than appeals to emotions and personal beliefs (Block, 2019) (Mochamad Taufik and Nana S. 2022: 20-21).

In another statement according to Jonatan in his research on hoaxes and violence in the post truth era, argued that the existence of the post truth era is not only a challenge for the government, but also for society in general, therefore the community must work together to eradicate and anticipate hoaxes and the emergence of violence (Manaransyah S, 2022: 46-47).

Post-truth can be understood as a phenomenon in which disinformation spreads among people. There are three main characteristics of post-truth, namely lies, rejection of science and the dominance of emotions (Block, 2019). Emotion is the most crucial factor in understanding post-truth. Therefore, objective facts have no significant impact in shaping public opinion. (Swarnawati A, and Robby M. 2022: 3) One issue that continues is the hoax phenomenon. False information related to politics, health, social issues, natural disasters, and various other topics spread widely in society. Through various means and changes, hoaxes, fake news, and hate speech have become common and difficult to eradicate (Pinardi P, and Ira D, 2023: 61).

Hoax news itself is false news or fake news in an effort to deceive so that people who access the information are trapped in lies (hoaxes) and the rampant circulation of fake news (hoaxes) can have a negative impact on the development of the Indonesian state (Halawa N, & Famahato L, 2022: 240).

Hoaxes or fake news are troubling and even detrimental to society. The spread of hoaxes is very easy, through online media and with a short time the public can access and easily believe this news and even possibly share it again. Hoaxes can deceive anyone, from the illiterate, highly educated, having a position, even religious people can be deceived (Nurlatun R, et al, 2021: 1).

According to Endah S. and Nurmiati, information providers often do not filter the reliability of the content delivered to the public, so news that may be inaccurate and false information (hoaxes) that are provocative can influence readers and audiences in a negative way (2022: 155). This has the potential to cause hostility, anger and division among the public. Adverse opinions, slander and hate speech can have a negative impact on the targeted individual or group, even creating a sense of victimization, group, even creating a sense of fear and threat, which in turn can damage reputation and result in financial loss.

Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) in a report titled Information Disorder explain that hoaxes can be divided into three main categories: misinformation, which is information that is false but spread without the intention to deceive; disinformation, which is information that is deliberately created and spread to deceive others; and malinformation, which is information that is true but used with the aim of harming a person or group (Mardalena L, et al, 2025: 169).

Issues regarding the spread of false information, bullying, and hate speech have recently become hot topics of discussion among the public. Derakhshan

(2017) This reflects the change from an initially simple society to a more modern and complex one. Interactions in the digital world between community members open up opportunities for various forms of fraud, harassment, and hate speech to emerge. (Josafat A, et al, 2023:1) 27

Today, information technology has developed very quickly, following the needs of the times. The internet, which has now advanced and become a basic necessity for everyone, has become the main communication medium. 17

The more information that is easily accessed and obtained makes it possible for the information to have a high trust value, as a result, the information will either be true information or false information. (Nashoihul I, 2023: 54).

Easy access to social media brings some consequences that can be detrimental to others. Freedom of expression is now often abused by irresponsible individuals, for example in the form of spreading false information or harm. Although the government has implemented regulations and threats, it is not enough to provide a deterrent effect to the perpetrators. This fake news is deliberately created to influence or change the views of readers.

According to Rahardi, the spread of hoaxes has various purposes, such as for jokes, bringing down opponents (black campaign), fraud in promotion, or even inviting good practices that actually have no clear basis (Garda S, et al, 2022: 32). In Indonesia, the threat of hoaxes and disinformation is increasingly evident in the political context, especially during elections and local elections. For example, a study conducted by (Duile & Tamma, 2021), shows that in the 2019 General Election, there was an increase in the spread of misinformation and misleading narratives aimed at dividing society. The spread of this misinformation not only undermines the fairness of elections, but also causes public distrust of state institutions. (Duile and Tamma, 2021) noted that political disinformation is used in a planned way to create polarization in society, undermine the sense of national solidarity, and reduce trust in the government. (Sarjito A, 2024:176).

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, polarization refers to the separation into two opposing groups (such as groups of people who have certain interests, and so on). Thus, polarization of opinion is a division between two groups based on their opposing views. Wilson (2005) states that polarization can result from a deep commitment to a particular culture, ideology, or candidate, which causes division between one group and another. Polarization makes a group feel that their views and principles are the most correct, while the opposing group is considered the wrong party in terms of political and moral views.

Whereas in other contexts such as academia, polarization refers to a phenomenon where opinions, attitudes, or views in a society or group become increasingly extreme and opposing, thus creating a sharp gap between groups. This phenomenon can occur in various aspects of social life, including political, social, and economic (Fathurahman R, et al: 2024).

The bubble filter phenomenon was first introduced by Eli Pariser, an internet activist and author. He presented this idea in a TEDTalks seminar held in California in 2011, where he stated that the filter bubble is “the realm of information owned by each individual, which is unique and depends on the user's behavior on the internet” (Pariser, 2011a). Although this algorithm seems simple and harmless, it can actually help users in searching and finding the content they are interested in on the internet.

Haim proved this by conducting research on Google News in the context of politics, sports, and entertainment. The research shows that the bubble filter phenomenon has a significant impact on algorithm personalization. Every internet user is helped in dealing with the vast amount of information available, thanks to the filter algorithm. This algorithm will present several recommendations tailored to individual needs.

However, research conducted by Hannak et al (2013) had different results. The research was conducted on web searches with Google in an attempt to identify the impact of the algorithm designed in the bubbler filter on personalization. The results showed that the effect of filter bubbles on personalization in information search was measured to be small. One of the reasons is due to the wide variety of queries used in the search.

The bubble filter algorithm also contributes to the emergence of the echo chamber phenomenon, which is a situation where individuals on the internet who are interested in a particular topic will be grouped by the system to often interact or view similar content with other individuals who have the same interests (Wulandari V, et al, 2021: 99-100). Like bubble filters, the echo chamber phenomenon is not risky, but rather makes it easier and more helpful for users. However, despite the benefits, they also have negative aspects such as filter bubbles that can make our minds accustomed to the content we like, so we feel comfortable and end up not paying attention to things outside the topic. Or at the very least, we realize too late that there are important issues that should be brought to our attention, but the algorithm limits them. In addition, the impact of echo chambers can inhibit creativity, make a person narrow-minded, and can trigger cognitive bias, which is an error in thinking about a topic (Wulandari V, et al, 2021: 101-102).

In addition to hoaxes and polarization, identity manipulation is also one of the challenges in the post truth era as we know that identity manipulation is disguising, changing, or hiding the true identity of a person or group in order to achieve planned goals, such as deceiving others, avoiding responsibility, or building false perceptions of oneself. This can be done consciously for their own benefit and this activity often occurs in social media which is rampant in manipulating their real identity. The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly changed the landscape of communication and public information. AI not only accelerates information distribution but also plays a role in content personalization, communication automation, and public opinion management on various digital

platforms. According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2019) in the journal *Business Horizons*, AI has changed the way humans interact with information, especially through technologies such as chatbots, search algorithms, big data analysis, and deepfakes. In public communication, AI is used to support data-driven journalism, detect fake news, and help government agencies and companies develop more effective communication strategies. One of the biggest impacts of AI in public communication media is automated content creation. AI such as GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) technologies enable the creation of news, reports, and analysis that can be analyzed. (Mardalena L, et al, 2025: 169-170).

AI is now used to automatically generate content, from news articles to videos, which speeds up the flow of information but also increases the risk of spreading disinformation, such as through deepfakes and synthetic content. Thus, accelerating the rapid distribution of news. Low levels of media literacy on digital platforms make the spread of fake news, polarization and identity manipulation easier. To prevent these things from happening when using social media, people are advised to improve their digital literacy. Potter states that the higher an individual's media literacy skills, the more meaning can be found from the media content consumed. Conversely, individuals with low levels of media literacy tend to be able to capture little or superficial meaning from the messages or information received. The importance of digital media literacy according to Sari Y, & Hendri P (2022: 14) is based on several reasons, namely:

1. Many people still engage in social media but are not aware of the possible consequences of their online behavior, especially when it comes to content on digital media.
2. Content on digital platforms can guide people in both explicit and implicit ways about the actions they take.
3. Different people in society have different ways of responding to news or information found on digital media.

This can radically affect how people use media and how they respond to what they can get from social media.

Building a positive national identity on social media

Social media is currently used by various groups in Indonesia, ranging from adults to children (Cahyono, 2016). Through these platforms, information can be disseminated quickly and evenly. The resulting changes and impacts are also felt by Indonesian society as a whole. Outside cultures also easily enter Indonesia through social media, which in turn can influence people's preferences, environment and lifestyle. Therefore, social media has a significant impact in shaping national identity. (Ramadhina A, et al: 2023: 773).

The younger generation, who play the role of transformation actors in this country, contribute to the good and bad state of a nation. Greene emphasizes the

importance of the role of the younger generation as drivers of social change, a generation that can trigger change by creating possibilities for a society of mutual respect and dignity. However, with the times, the contribution of the younger generation seems to be declining. Suryadi revealed that only a few young people actively participate in their role as agents of change. The main problem is often caused by the young generation's uncertainty about the future. However, this does not always have a negative impact. This situation can motivate the younger generation to increase their sense of responsibility and realize their position as social beings. Young people are expected to think critically and be proactive in carrying out their function as changemakers (Jundan H, et al., 2022: 985).

Building a national identity on social media platforms is a crucial step to strengthen love for the country in this digital age. Social media serves as a powerful tool to disseminate national values such as tolerance, unity, and respect for various cultures. This can be done by sharing positive content about the history of the nation's struggle, national heroes, and regional traditions and cultures that reflect the richness of Indonesia. In addition, the use of polite language and a wise attitude in discussions on social media are very influential in creating a healthy digital space that upholds the spirit of nationalism. Social media can also be utilized to counter disinformation and fake news that have the potential to divide society by disseminating accurate and educational information.

A study by Sari and Nugroho (2020) shows that social media plays an important role in raising people's collective awareness of national identity, especially through digital campaigns and large public engagement. In this context, social media not only functions as a communication tool, but also as an ideological battleground to maintain and shape national identity amid globalization and challenges from transnational ideologies (Hidayat, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Social media now serves as a new platform in shaping a nation's identity, especially in the post-truth era characterized by the dominance of emotions and personal opinions over objective facts. In a wave of often unverified information, national identity is no longer constructed straightforwardly by formal institutions such as the state or mainstream media, but rather through digital interactions that are flexible, participatory and often fragmented. Social media algorithms that reinforce cognitive biases also increase the risk of identity polarization, the spread of misinformation, and the emergence of narrow and exclusive national narratives. However, social media also provides opportunities for people to create and disseminate national values in creative, democratic and inclusive ways. National identity can now be translated into various digital formats, ranging from social campaigns, digital artworks, to online discussions involving many groups of people. This opens up the possibility for a national identity that takes into account cultural diversity and social dynamics. Therefore, it is important for everyone to have digital literacy and critical thinking skills in responding to information received. Strengthening the role of educational institutions, media and government in creating

a healthy digital ecosystem is also a strategic step to ensure that social media has a positive impact on strengthening national identity amid the challenges of the post-truth era.

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